

News story: RAF Typhoons use Brimstone capability for the first time

Strikes have decreased in regularity this month, with the terrorists confined to a tiny enclave of territory where there is a significant number of civilians, who are being transported to safety by Syrian Democratic Forces.

However, a Typhoon was deployed to the River Euphrates on 19 February, where a boat used by Daesh had been identified and was destroyed using the Brimstone missile. The RAF also destroyed two Daesh strong-points, including a heavy machine-gun position, on 11 February using Paveway IV.

The Brimstone was one of three weapons upgrades fitted onto the Typhoon last month under 'Project Centurion', worth £425m over the past three years. This project not only enhanced the Typhoon with the precision attack missile Brimstone, but the aircraft also now has deep strike cruise missile Storm Shadow and air-to-air missile Meteor at its disposal. It means the jets have boosted capabilities to intercept airborne missiles and strike ground based targets, seamlessly taking over from the Tornado's attack role as it nears retirement.

Summary

- Monday 11 February – Typhoons supported the Syrian Democratic Forces east of Abu Kamal in Syria, striking two Daesh strong-points, including a heavy machine-gun position.
- Tuesday 19 February – Typhoons used a Brimstone 2 missile to destroy a boat used by Daesh on the Euphrates.

Detail

As the Syrian Democratic Forces have continued their operations to clear the last small remaining pocket of Daesh-held territory that has been identified in eastern Syria, Royal Air Force aircraft have maintained daily armed reconnaissance support, delivering air attacks if needed by the SDF on the ground. On Monday 11 February, the SDF encountered two Daesh strong-points on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, across the river from Abu Kamal. These strong-points were directing fire, including from a heavy machine-gun, at close range against the SDF, so assistance was requested from two RAF Typhoon FGR4s, supported by a Voyager air refuelling tanker. The Typhoons conducted an accurate simultaneous attack on both strong-points, hitting each with a Paveway IV guided bomb, and successfully eliminated the threat to the SDF.

A further pair of Typhoons patrolled the Euphrates valley on Tuesday 19 February; a boat had been identified as being used by Daesh, and was found by the Typhoons to be moored on the river bank due south of Baghuz Fawqani. A Brimstone 2 missile was employed to deny the terrorists use of the craft, whether to bring in supplies or allow them to set up operations elsewhere.

This was the first operational firing of a Brimstone 2 from a Typhoon FGR4, following the aircraft's recent upgrade.